



1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND

One of the elements of the 1996 Transit Tax was the implementation of neighborhood circulators. Currently, there are five (5) neighborhood circulators operating in Tempe, all north of US 60. Referred to as the Orbit system, the five routes are named Earth, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury and Venus. All Orbit routes operate with no fare required and serve the area north of US 60 and converging at the Tempe Transportation Center. Orbit service operates seven days a week from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. with 15 minute frequency on weekdays. Weekend service operates at a slightly reduced level.

In the 2007/08, Transportation staff began the planning process to expand Orbit service south of US 60. Before any planning was accomplished and due to the national economic down turn, expansion planning efforts were halted in order to address the looming budget deficit.

In June 2014, the Tempe City Council authorized staff to conduct a public involvement process to explore implementing Orbit service in the area between US60 and Elliot Road from the east city border with Mesa to the west city border with Guadalupe and Phoenix.

2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OBJECTIVES

The City of Tempe values public input and believes that community members should be engaged early on in decisions that affect them. The purpose of the Public Involvement Program (PIP) is to create an open and transparent process to guide the expansion of the Orbit neighborhood circulator system south of US 60 resulting in a shared community vision.

The scope of the PIP is to:

- Provide objective information to assist the public in understanding the purpose of expanding the Orbit neighborhood circulator system south of US 60.
- Seek and encourage the involvement of all community members.
- Provide a variety of opportunities for the public to contribute ideas and provide feedback through all phases of the process.
- Make the process accessible and engaging to interested community members.
- Consider the public input in the expansion of Orbit neighborhood circulator south of US 60.
- Provide an opportunity for public participation by all stakeholders including people with disabilities and limited English proficiency.

3. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

An early step in the Public Involvement Program is to identify the internal and external community members that have an interest in the process.

Internal

- Mayor and Council
- City Departments
- Transportation Commission
- Mayor's Commission on Disability Concerns



- Neighborhood Advisory Commission

External

- Residents, businesses & property owners in the area from US 60 to Elliot Road from I-10 to Loop 101 including the Town of Guadalupe
- Neighborhood and Homeowners' Associations
- Educational Institutions
- Civic, Non-profit and Religious Groups

4. INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES & COMMUNICATION APPROACH

Public involvement and communication techniques varied depending on the phase of the planning efforts. The approach was to facilitate working directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently noted, understood and considered.

While traditional methods (meetings, presentations, etc.) play an important role in public engagement, social media and electronic participation and communication tools were also extensively used to disseminate information and broaden outreach, including considerations for limited English and English as a second language along with people with disabilities when gathering public comment.

The following dedicated websites and online URLs were used to share information and to collect feedback throughout the process:

Website <http://www.tempe.gov/orbit>
E-mail neighborhoods@tempe.gov
Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/CityofTempe>
Twitter @tempegov
Newsroom <http://www.tempe.gov/newsroom>
Comments <http://www.tempe.gov/orbit>

In April 2014, WestGroup Research conducted a statistically significant 8 to 10-minute telephone survey (which included cellular numbers) and opt-in web-based survey of Tempe residents who live in the predetermined geographic area to gain insights into perceptions of the proposed expansion of Tempe's Orbit Neighborhood Circulator System.

All of the following methods were used to achieve broad and continuous public participation:

- Distribution of door hangers and postcards in the project area.
- Documents posted on the project website.
- Comment forms available at the public meetings.
- Online comment forms available throughout the duration of the project.
- Presentations to stakeholder Boards and Commissions.
- Presentations to stakeholder Neighborhood and Homeowners' Associations
- Bi-lingual communication and interpreter services

The communication methods used include:

- Door hangers to residents and businesses within targeted area
- Reminder postcards mailed to neighborhood association members in targeted area



- Press releases
- Tempe Today articles (Phases 2 and 3 of public meetings)
- Social media
- Tempe 11
- City online calendar
- Project web site
- Handouts at other city events and meetings
- Partner communication vehicles

5. PROJECT TIMELINE/PUBLIC MEETINGS

- Feb. 26, 2014 - Kiwanis/The Lakes Character Area Meeting with Transportation Station
- April 5, 2014 - Kiwanis/The Lakes Character Area Meeting with Transportation Station
- June 2, 2014 - Kiwanis/The Lakes Character Area Meeting
- June 10, 2014 - Transportation Commission presentation
- June 12, 2014 - City Council meeting
- August 26, 2014 - Kiwanis/The Lakes Character Area Meeting
- August 27, 2014 - Kiwanis/The Lakes Character Area Meeting
- September 26, 2014: Council Friday Packet
- October 25, 2014 – Orbit bus taken to Getting Arizona Involved in Neighborhoods (GAIN) parties within targeted area
- December 4, 2014: Mayor’s Commission on Disability Concerns meeting
- January 6, 2015: Transportation Commission meeting
- January 2015: Public meetings on January 21 and 24 at Marcos de Niza High School with online comment form available January 21 to February 9, 2015. This series of meetings gauged resident points of interest, hours, frequency and days of service levels.
- February 4, 2015: Neighborhood Advisory Commission meeting
- April 10, 2015: Council Friday Packet
- April 14, 2015: Transportation Commission meeting
- April 2015: Public meetings on April 29 and May 2 at Marcos de Niza High School with online comment form available from April 29 to May 18, 2015. This series of meetings included draft route(s) based on the previous public input from residents.
- May 14, 2015: Presentation at Cole Park Neighborhood Association meeting
- June 3, 2015: Neighborhood Advisory Commission meeting
- August 11, 2015: Transportation Commission meeting
- August 14, 2015: Council Friday Packet
- September 2, 2015: Neighborhood Advisory Commission meeting
- September 2015: Public meetings on September 9 and 12 at Marcos de Niza High School with online comment form available from September 9 to 28. This series of meetings included a final proposed route for input based on the previous public input from residents.
- September 14, 2015: Mayor’s Commission on Disability Concerns meeting
- October 22, 2015: Meeting with representatives from Marcos de Niza High School
- October 23, 2015: Meeting with representatives from Tempe Elementary School District #3
- November 12, 2015: Transportation Commission meeting
- December 3, 2015: City Council meeting



- January 2016: Order Orbit vehicles, if approved by Council. Staff estimates that it would cost \$850,000 in capital costs to purchase the required fleet.
- February 2017 or August 2017: Infrastructure/signs for Orbit stops, if approved by Council
- April 2017 or October 2017: Implement route, if approved by Council

6. PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULING, LOCATION & ACCESS

There were three phases of general public meetings held; the first to inform the public about the project and to gather input from residents, businesses and organizations on the draft route concept, the second to review the preferred route concepts and a third to present one draft route concept. Public meetings were scheduled at times that help maximize attendance. Meetings were held in locations accessible to persons with disabilities and as near as possible to transit routes when possible. With 48 hours advance notice, special assistance was provided for persons with sight and/or hearing impairments; a Spanish language translator was also made available for each meeting.

7. RESPONSIBLE DOCUMENTATION

Documentation of all phases of the process occurred for future use and understanding of how the program worked, what comments were received and how the results of the public involvement were used in the expansion of the Orbit neighborhood circulator system.

Documentation included:

- The Public Involvement Program

List and samples of outreach and communication documents

- Database of participant contact information
- Public comments
- Survey results

8. PROCESS EVALUATION & CONCLUSION

The City of Tempe seeks continual improvement of all of its activities. An evaluation was performed throughout the public involvement process to ensure the PIP was meeting participation requirements mandated by state law. Feedback opportunities related to public involvement techniques were provided through the website and meetings and continuously reviewed.

For further information about the process, please contact the following City of Tempe staff:

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